

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P R 151405Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9539

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

S E C R E T LOME 1814

EXDIS

NOFORN

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: TO PINS PFOR MILI

SUBJECT: CHARGES OF COUP PLOTTING REMAIN UNPUBLICIZED

REF: A) STATE 191868, B) LOME 1789, C) LOME 1778,

D) LOME 1776

1. SUMMARY: ARREST OF TOGOLESE MILITARY OFFICERS HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY. PRESIDENT EYADEMA SPENDING WEEK IN NORTHERN HOME AREA, LEAVING LOME TO STEW IN RUMOR. HE IS EXPECTED TO RETURN BY AUGUST 18. WHAT HAPPENS THEN PROBABLY CONTINGENT UPON WHO AMONG GOT OFFICIALS HAS EYADEMA'S EAR IN NORTH.

2. ARREST OF TOGOLESE MILITARY OFFICERS (REF D) HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY. MEANWHILE, PRESIDENT EYADEMA IS VISITING HOMETOWN PYA IN NORTH, WHERE HE WENT FOLLOWING GENERAL GOWON'S DEPARTURE FROM TOGO ON AUGUST 11. SPECULATION ABOUNDS IN LOME, WE ARE TOLD. EYADEMA EXPECTED TO RETURN TO LOME BY AUGUST 18.

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3. GERMAN AMBASSADOR HAFERKAMP TOLD ME YESTERDAY HE HAD HEARD

OF COMLAN'S ARREST AND ALLEGED LINK WITH AMERICAN EMBASSY IN COUP PLOTTING FROM HIS SENIOR LOCAL EMPLOYEE. FORMER GOT AMBASSADOR TO US DOCTOR ALIN (ALEXANDER) OHIN ALSO INTRODUCED SUBJECT WHEN HE CALLED ON ME YESTERDAY AT CHANCERY AT HIS REQUEST. HE CAME OSTENSIBLY ON ANOTHER MATTER. OHIN SAID COMLAN, WHO IS HIS NEPHEW, HAD LONG BEEN TARGET OF EYADEMA. MOREOVER, EYADEMA NOW EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT COUP PLOTS ELSEWHERE, ESPECIALLY IN ZAIRE, AND IN ABSENCE OF ANYTHING ELSE TO PIN ON COMLAN, HAD USED LATTER'S FRIENDLY CONTACTS WITH OFFICIAL AMERICANS TO JUSTIFY HIS ARREST. OHIN DID NOT THINK EYADEMA WOULD PUBLICIZE THIS RATIONALE, EVEN IF ARRESTS WERE ANNOUNCED, BECAUSE HE HAD NO PROOF US WAS INVOLVED. I OBSERVED THAT ZAIRE HAD NOT POSSESSED ANY PROOF EITHER. I TOLD BOTH OHIN AND HAFERKAMP THAT US MISSION HERE WAS KEEPING CALM IN KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO FOUNDATION TO ALLEGATIONS OF AMERICAN CONNECTION IN PLOTTING. OHIN PREVIOUSLY HAS TOLD ME OF HIS CONCERN ABOUT EYADEMA AND PRESIDENT'S GROWING INSULATION FROM INTELLIGENT AND MODERATE COUNSEL. OHIN FEARS RADICALIZATION OF TOGO, AND I DETECT AN INCREASINGLY DESPERATE NOTE IN HIS APPRAISAL OF CURRENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE. INCIDENTALLY, OHIN ALSO CONFIRMED THAT LAWSON UNDER ARREST IS COMMANDANT TEYI LAWSON OF FINANCE MINISTRY (REF C).

4. COMMENT: I DECIDED NOT TO CURTAIL MY TRIP, BUT TO RETURN TO TOGO AS SCHEDULED LATE AFTERNOON AUGUST 12 (REF D). GOT FONMIN ALREADY KNEW OF MY TRAVEL PLANS, AND EARLIER RETURN COULD HAVE REINFORCED RUMORS OF US INVOLVEMENT IN COUP PLOTTING. I HAVE REQUESTED ALL AMERICAN MISSION STAFF (EXCEPT PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR WHO IS ABSENT) TO FIRMLY REJECT ANY CHARGE MADE TO THEM OF US INVOLVEMENT AND TO REFRAIN FROM ENGAGING IN SPECULATION, EVEN WITH TOGOLESE AND OTHERS WHOM THEY KNOW WELL. STAFF MEMBERS ARE COMMENDABLY CALM. DURING CUSTOMARY SUMMER DOLDRUMS IN LOME, OUR PRESENT LOW PROFILE IS NOT QUESTIONABLE. LOCAL SITUATION COULD CHANGE COMPLETELY UPON EYADEMA'S RETURN TO CAPITAL. I BELIEVE KEY TO PRESIDENT'S NEXT MOVE IS WHATEVER ADVICE HE IS GETTING IN PYA, IF HE IS LISTENING TO ANYONE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER RADICAL INTERIOR MINISTER EKLO IS WITH HIM, BUT EKLO UNDOUBTEDLY IS TRYING TO POISON EYADEMA'S MIND AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AND TO PRECIPITATE

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PUBLIC CHARGE OF US IMPLICATION IN COUP PLOTTING. TOGO, AFTER ALL, IS LIVING ONE NATIONAL LIE WHICH EKLO HELPED FABRICATE, I.E., "SARAKAWA." EKLO INCIDENTALLY IS IN BIT OF TROUBLE WITH EYADEMA OVER CRUDE MANNER IN WHICH HE RECENTLY ORDERED POLICE TO REMOVE BIBLES IN MIDDLE OF NIGHT FROM ALL GUEST ROOMS IN LOME'S NEW LUXURY "HOTEL DE LA PAIX." HOTEL MANAGER GEORGE BROWN DESCRIBED THIS EVENT TO ME AND SAID HE HAD COMPLAINED TO EYADEMA ABOUT EKLO'S INTERFERENCE. BROWN, IS SWISS NATIONAL

AND HUSBAND OF LIBERIAN CITIZEN. BOTH ARE WELL KNOWN TO ME FROM MY TOUR IN LIBERIA. I HAVE SEEN LITTLE OF BROWN, WHO WORKS OVER-TIME TO KEEP UNDERBOOKED, OVERSTAFFED STATE-OWNED HOTEL AFLOAT. BROWN TOLD ME JUST PRIOR TO MY TRIP THAT EKLO HAD ACCUSED HIM OF BEING CIA AGENT AND HAD THREATENED TO DEPORT HIM. BROWN, WHO CLAIMS HE LEFT LIBERIA BECAUSE HE WAS UNWILLING TO MAKE LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO LATE PRESIDENT TUBMAN, WOULD NOT HESITATE TO LEAVE TOGO IF EYADEMA'S SUPPORT FAILED HIM.

5. EMBASSY HS NO OBJECTION TO REPEATING THIS MESSAGE TO USDAO ABIDJAN IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS.

RAWLS

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